

North Carolina Coalition for Lobbying and Government Reform

2019-2020 Redistricting Bills

All reform bills require districts that will be compact, contiguous, and abide by state and federal law to protect the voting strength of racial minority groups. No use shall be made of political factors, including voter registration, previous election results, or incumbents' addresses, except where needed to comply with state and federal law. They also make resources available to facilitate citizen participation in the process and provide a timetable or schedule for the process.

Those with citizen commissions include strict requirements on who can serve on the Commission to minimize partisan or political influence and restricts Commissioners from running for public office for a period of time after service. They also allow the Commission or staff to draw plans for local government entities as directed by the North Carolina General assembly.

House Bill 69 - Nonpartisan Redistricting Commission

- Not a constitutional amendment, final approval remains with General Assembly
- 11-person commission made up of voters from a pool nominated by legislative leaders—4 Democrats, 4 Republicans and 3 not affiliated with either major party. Commissioners shall represent the state's racial, ethnic, geographic and gender diversity.
- The commission will hold a total of 21 public hearings both before and after the drawing of the maps, create the maps in a transparent public process and encourage citizen participation.
- Once the commission completes and approves a redistricting plan, the plan will be sent to the NC General Assembly, which will vote on the maps without altering them. If the NC General Assembly rejects the maps, they must explain why. The Commission will redraw maps and submit them again to the NC General Assembly.

House Bill 140 - The FAIR Act

- Constitutional amendment—requires 60% support in each house to place it on the ballot. Then, a majority of voters must approve the amendment before it is added to the NC Constitution.
- Maps will be drawn by legislative staff, with an advisory commission, and NC General Assembly will retain authority over passage of the maps. It does not establish an independent commission.
- The advisory commission will answer questions from the legislative staff, authorize policies for the release of information related to the redistricting plans, and organize, conduct and summarize 3 public hearings.

House Bill 648 - NC FAIR State and Congressional Districts Act

- Not a constitutional amendment, final approval remains with General Assembly
- Creates Independent Redistricting Commission with 16 members—11 voting members and 5 non-voting alternates. 8 members chosen by legislative leadership in both houses, these 8 members chose the final 3.
- Commission hires a special master to draw at least two sets of maps for the North Carolina General Assembly and US Congressional districts.
- The Commission shall determine which of the plans drawn by the special master are to be submitted to the NC General Assembly. Members of the NC General Assembly are not precluded from amending the maps or drafting their own.

House Bill 827 - N.C. Citizens Redistricting Commission

- Not a constitutional amendment, final approval remains with General Assembly
- Creates 15-member commission divided among the two largest parties and voters unaffiliated with both major parties. 9 are appointed by 2 each from the legislative leadership in both parties and 1 by the Governor. The remaining 6 will be chosen by the original 9.
- The State Auditor shall provide the commission with a list of names of potential special masters who may draw plans should the Commission not be able to agree on maps.
- Requires commission to hold a minimum of 20 hearings across the state. It shall provide the public with resources so that they may understand and review any plans. It shall also provide access to the resources needed to draw maps using the mapping software and census data.
- The Commission and its members are subject to NC's public meetings law.

Senate Bill 673 - N.C. Citizens Redistricting Commission

- Constitutional amendment—requires 60% support in each house to place it on the ballot. Then, a majority of voters must approve the amendment before it is added to the NC Constitution.
- The N.C. Citizens Redistricting Commission has final say on maps, no role for General Assembly.
- Creates a 15-person commission—5 Democrats, 5 Republicans and 5 from neither of the two largest parties. 8 members are appointed by leadership of both parties in the NC House and Senate from a pool of voters that have applied and been pre-cleared for eligibility. The final 7 are chosen at random. Applicants must meet strict criteria to limit partisan influence.
- Commission shall hold at least 20 hearings—10 before the plan is drawn and 10 after an initial plan created but before it is finalized.
- Commission shall make resources available to the public to permit them to draw their own maps, understand the process, and submit comments. It shall do all it can to facilitate the ability of the public to provide substantive comments on any proposed plan.
- If the Commission is unable to adopt a plan, it shall hire a Special Master to draw a plan, which shall be adopted by the Commission.

House Bill 574 and Senate Bill 641 – Fix Our Democracy

Identical bills that address a number of democracy reform issues, including redistricting reform.

- Constitutional amendment—requires 60% support in each house to place it on the ballot. Then, a majority of voters must approve the amendment before it is added to the NC Constitution.
- Creates a 15-member Citizens Redistricting Commission—5 Democrats, 5 Republicans and 5 not from either major party. Passage of maps requires at least 9 votes with 3D, 3R, 3U votes.
- Legislative leaders in both chambers select 2 commissioners each. These 8 commissioners select the remaining 7 commissioners from the remaining pool (need 6 votes minimum in this process)
- Commissioners then select from a list of viable Special Masters submitted by the State Auditor. The Special Master will draw the maps if the Commission is unable to agree.
- The Commission shall hold 20 public hearings—10 before the maps are drawn and 10 after the maps are drawn to encourage citizen involvement and participation.

